Understanding & Translating Colloquial English into Arabic An etic-emic approach

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Chapter Four Understanding & confusion

- UnderstandingKnowledgeConfusionIndecisionMaking a decision

Lesson 1: Understanding

Understand (v.)—(- stood, - stood, not in a progressive form) = to know or recognize the meaning of something يفهم; to know well the character of and have a sympathetic feeling towards people or their behaviour

understanding (n.) فهم understanding (adj.) = kind or showing sympathy towards somebody مُتعاطف أُو مُتفهّم

misunderstand (v. Opposite of 'understand') يسيء فهم أو يفهم خطأ (misunderstanding (n.) سوء فهم أو سوء تفاهم understandable (adj.) مفهوم أو يمكن فهمه أو ممكن فهمه أو له ما يبرره (kmisunderstandable (adj.) كا غَروَ أن أو لأسباب يمكن فهمها لا غَروَ أن أو لأسباب يمكن فهمها lack of understanding (phrase) قلة الفهم أو نقص الفهم

Informal Expressions:

To say that you understand what has been said to you colloquially, you can say:

- I see
- I see what you mean
- The penny's dropped
- I get/got it
- I get/got you
- I catch it

OR: I catch the meaning

فهمت، فهمت قصدك، استوعبت، وصلت الرسالة أو الفكرة أو وصلت رسالتك

أو فكرتك (أو بالعامية: لقفتها أو دخلت دماغي أو ماشي).

e.g. At the beginning, the students could only stare at the teacher at a loss, catching no word. Then, **the penny's dropped**, and they started taking part in the lesson.

في البداية كان الطلاب يحملقون في المدرّس بحيرة من أمرهم؛ إذ لم يفهموا كلمة من كلامه، إلا إنهم بعد ذلك استوعبوا كلامه فبدأوا يشاركون بالدرس.

e.g. Did you catch my meaning? Yes, I get it.

- هل فهمت قصدی؟
 - نعم، فهمت.

Informal Expressions:

To say that you cannot understand or it is hard to understand something, you can say:

- **It beats me** = it is difficult to understand
- It's beyond me = it is impossible for me to understand OR: It's above my head
- Can't make a head or tail (out) of it = can't understand it at all

من الصعب فهمه، يصعب فهمه، أعلى من مستواي، فوق مستواي، لا أفهم ... أو بالعامية: ما أفهم رأسها من أساسها أو مستحيل أفهمه أو من سابع المستحيلات أفمه ..

e.g. It beats me how he can live in such a horrible house!

e.g. *It's beyond me* why she resigned from the company before finding another job.

من الصعب (ما ممكن) أن أفهم لمّ قدمت استقالتها من الشركة قبل أن تجد عملاً آخر.

e.g. Do your report again. I can't make heads or tails out of it. اعدْ كتابة تقريرك، فليس بمقدوري أن أعرف رأسه من أساسه.

Some proverbs on 'knowledge'

- Live and learn

عشْ وتعلّم.

- Knowledge is power

العلم (أو المعرفة) قوة.

- Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave أطلب العلم من المهد إلى اللحد
 - A sound mind in a sound body
- العقل السليم في الجسم السليم
 By others' faults, wise men learn
 من أخطاء الآخرين، يتعلّم العقلاء (أو: الحكماء) أو العاقل من يتعظ من
- If you do not know, ask إن لم تكن تعرف، فاسأل (أو: لا عيب أن تسأل إن كنت لا تعرف) أو السؤال ليس عبيا (أو بالعامية: السؤال مو عيب)

Lesson 2: Having some knowledge

Know (v.)—(knew, known, not in a progressive form)

- 1- to have knowledge of something
- 2- to be familiar with a person, a place, etc.
- 3- To be able to recognize

يَعرف أو يَعلَم أو يميّز أو يتعرّف على ...

Know (n.) *informal* = having more information about something than most people: *People in the know* say the economy's in trouble. *People in the know* say that the minister is going to resign soon.

أهل الاختصاص أو مصدر مطلّع

معرفة (n.) معرفة

known (adj.) generally recognized as being stated thing معروف; see also 'known as' غير معروف بـ, معروف (unknown (opposite) غير معروف

knowingly (adv.) on purpose عمداً أو عن قصد or in a way that shows you understand بخبث أو عن دراية

knowledgeable (adj.) = having a lot: He is very knowledgeable about translation theories. لديه معرفة كبيرة، واسع المعرفة أو الإطلاع

عن خبرة، عن معرفة أو دراية (.knowledgeably (adv

على حدّ علمي أو حسبما أعرف (phrase) على حدّ علمي أو حسبما

Informal Expressions:

To show that you have some knowledge on a certain topic colloquially, you can use

- To know what is what
- To know the ropes
- To know a thing or two =
- S/he wasn't born yesterday
- To know on which side one's bread is buttered
- To know something inside out

يعرف خبايا الأمور، يعرف كل صغيرة وكبيرة، لديه ما يكفي من المعرفة، ليس ابن البارحة (أو بالعامية: مو غشيم)، يعرف من أين تؤكل الكتف

e.g. Don't worry – he's smart cookie; he knows the ropes.

e.g. You've a rich husband you should **know on which side your bread** is buttered.

e.g. Believe me, your dad will discover your lies quickly; he wasn't born yesterday.

e.g. There's no need to worry, your daughter knows a thing or two.

Some proverbs with 'to know'

- A bird is known by its note, and a man is known by his talk يعرف الطير من تغريده، وبعرف المرء من كلامه.
- A tree is known by its fruit.

تعرف قيمة الشجرة من ثمارها أو قيمة المرء ما يحسنه

Some idiomatic expressions with 'to know'

God knows

OR: Goddess/Heaven knows

الله أعلم، بمعنى لا أعرف .. يعرفه بالشكل فقط

To know somebody by sight

Lesson 3: Confusion

Confuse (v.)— (confused, confused) = to cause to be mixed up in the mind; to mix up in one's mind; to put into disorder =

يُحيّر، يُربِك، يُشوّش

مُحيّر أو صعب الفهم = (Confusing (adj.)

متحيّر، مشوّش، مُضِطَرب = (be, get) confused (adj.)

ارتباك، Confusion (n.)— the state of being mixed up or mistaken

فوضى، اضطراب or a state of disorder اضطراب، حيرة

Confusedly (adv.) بارتباك

A state of confusion (phrase) = عيرة من أمره أو في حالة من الحيرة

Informal Expressions:

To indicate that you are in a state of confusion colloquially, you can say:

- To feel at sea
- To be at my wits' end
- To be at a loss
- To be in a maze
- To be in a mess
- To be in a tingle

في حيرة من أمره، مُحيّر، مُتحيّر، مُشوّش، محتار

e.g. When I joined them, I felt all at sea.

عندما التحقت بهم، صرتُ في حيرة من أمري.

e.g. When I received the news, I felt all at sea.

e.g. Before the penny's dropped, they could only stare at my face at a loss, catching no word.

e.g. I'm lost in a maze of government regulations.

Informal Expressions:

- To be caught on the horns of the dilemma
- To fall between two stools

- To get all mixed upTo be all mixed upTo be all muddled up
- S/he can't think straight
- It's all upside down

e.g. When she told he's in love with another girl, I got all mixed up.

e.g. When I asked him of his opinion, he replied, while rubbing his forehead, he can't think straight.

e.g. Just give me some time to think over it; I'm all mixed up.

امنحني بعض الوقت كي أفكر في الأمر، فأنا مُشوّش.

Informal Expressions:

To throw someone or something into confusion = to cause people or a process to become confused or disorderly

e.g. The teacher turned up suddenly, thus **throwing** everyone in class into confusion.

ظهر المدرس فجأة، تاركاً جميع من في الصف في حالة دهشة أو في حيرة من أمرهم.

Some proverbs dealing with 'confusion'

- He who hesitates is lost

فاز باللذات من كان جسورا

Lesson 4: Indecision

Indecision (n.[U])— also 'indecisiveness' a state of being unable to decide between two things, possible courses of actions, etc. (for more details, see next lesson) تردّد

Indecisive (adj.) having or showing inability to make decisions; giving uncertain results متردّد

Indecisively (adv.) بتردّد

Informal Expressions:

To indicate that you are in a state of indecision colloquially, you could say:

- To shilly-shally
- To be in two (twenty) minds
- To sleep on it
- To be in a quandary

e.g. When he asked me out, I shilly-shallied as usual.

e.g. There's no need to sleep on it – it's yes and no.

e.g. Just give more time please, I'm still **in two minds** about your proposal.

e.g. The weather was so changeable here that I was in a quandary what kinds of clothes to wear.

Lesson 5: Making a decision

Decide (v.)— (decided, decided) = to make a choice or judgement about something; to cause to make a choice; to make someone decide

يختار، يبتّ، يُقرر، يتخذ قرارا، يجعله يُقرر

Decision (n.) (see also, 'indecision', 'indecisiveness')

واضح، مؤكد، جازم Decided (adj.) clear or definite

حاسم أو فاصل أو جازم (adj.)

بصورة حازمة (adv.) بصورة

حتما، من دون شك، من دون ريب Decidedly (adv.)

Informal Expressions:

Making a decision can be described colloquially as in:

- To make up one's mind = to decide
- **To come to a decision** = to decide
- To burn one's boats = to make a final decision
- To burn one's bridge = to make a final decision

e.g. Honestly, I'd love to come, but I don't have time. Is it alright if I call you back when I make my mind?

بصراحة، أرغب بالمجيء، لكنني لا أملك الوقت الكافي. هل لي أن أتصّل بك عندما أتوصّل إلى قرار (أو عندما أقرر).

- e.g. After keeping remarkably silent for more than five minutes, he broke his vow of silence by **coming to a decision** on selling his shares.
- كسر حالة الصمت المقيت التي خيمّت عليه لأكثر من خمس دقائق باتخاذه قرار بشأن بيع أسهمه.
- e.g. I've burned my bridge by resigning from the company before getting another job.

قررت قراراً لا رجعة فيه بأن أستقيل من الشركة قبل أن أحصل على عملٍ آخر.

حرقت الأخضر واليابس عندما قررت أن استقيل ...

Informal Expressions:

- To toss up for it = to let chance decide an issue
- To toss up a coin = to let chance decides an issue

يترك القدر يقرر، يتركها للحظ، يتركها للمصادفة

- e.g. Will you meet her up again next week?
 - I don't know, let's toss up for it (or let's toss up a coin).
 - هل ستلتقى بها ثانية في الأسبوع القادم؟
 - لا أعرف، دعها للمصادفة.

Review — Chapter Four

EX: Change the words/expressions in bold with their corresponding colloquial words/expressions in the box. Then, translate them into Arabic.

make my mind	let's toss up for it	in two minds
all at sea	not born yesterday	in a quandary

- 1- I'd love to come, but I don't have time. Is it alright if I call you back when **I decide?**
- 2- Will we meet up again next week?
 - I don't know, let chance decide it.
- 3- Just give more time please, I'm still **confused** about your proposal.
- 4- When I received the news, I **felt confused**.
- 5- Don't do it again, your dad knows everything.
- 6- The weather was so changeable here that I **got confused** what kinds of clothes to wear

EX: Complete the following sentences below with words in the box. Then, translate them into Arabic:

bread	decision	bridge	sleep	ropes
1- I've buri	ned my	- by resign	ning from	the company
before ge	etting another job).		
2- After the	ree minutes of	silence, he	came to a	a on
selling hi	s shares.			
3- There's no	o need to	on it - it's a	an easy deci	ision.
4- He's a brig	ght boy; he knows t	he		
5- You've a	rich wife, so you	ı should knov	w on which	side your

EX: Match the following proverbs:

- He who hesitates is lost

- أطلب العلم من المهد إلى اللحد

- Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave

- من أخطاء الآخرين، يتعلّم العقلاء

- If you do not know, ask

- السؤال مو عيب

- By others' faults, wise men learn

- فازباللذات من كان جسورا

- A sound mind in a sound body

- يعرف الطير من تغريده، ويعرف المرء من كلامه.

- Knowledge is power

- عش وتعلّم.

- A bird is known by its note, and a man is known by his talk

- العقل السليم في الجسم السليم

- Live and learn

- العلم قوة.

EX: Try to translate the following colloquial sentences into English:

- أنا موغشيم.
- أنت تعرف من أين يؤكل الكتف.
 - أنت ما تهرول عبث.
 - حرقت الأخضر واليابس
 - خل أخمرها برأسي.
 - الله أعلم.
 - هسه لقفتها.
 - قابل أنا ابن البارحة.
 - السؤال مو عيب.
- بصراحة، كتابتك غريبة. ما أعرف رأسها من أساسها.